

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claims 10-15 have been canceled.

Election/Restrictions

2. This application is in condition for allowance except for the presence of claims 10-15 directed to a method of processing a process object contained in a processing space with ozone, non-elected without traverse. Accordingly, claims 10-15 have been cancelled.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The prior art fails to disclose or make obvious the ozone processing apparatus that processes a process object by using ozone gas, as claimed in independent claim 1. In particular, the prior art does not disclose or make obvious that (i) the joint between the ozone supply line and the steam supply line, (ii) the metal trap, (iii) the cooler, and (iv) the gas-liquid separator are arranged in that order in the ozone supply line from upstream to downstream. Accordingly, the mixing of the ozone gas and the water vapor takes place

before the mixed fluid can be passed through the metal trap to remove a metal. Then, the mixed fluid is cooled by the cooler. Finally, the ozone gas and the condensed water from the cooled fluid are separated by the gas-liquid separator.

4. In the claimed embodiment, metal components, which are produced by electric discharge and contained in ozone gas, can be effectively removed first by a metal trap employing a silicon-containing absorbent if the ozone gas is supplied to the metal trap with water vapor (paragraph 42 of Applicant's Specification). Contaminants not removed by the metal trap can then be removed by dissolving them in condensed water using the cooler and separating the condensed water from the gas (paragraph 22 of Applicant's Specification). Thus, the apparatus of claim 1 performs a two-step process, not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art, to remove contaminants in the ozone gas.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to CHRISTOPHER P. JONES whose telephone number is (571)270-7383. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Duane Smith can be reached on (571)272-1166. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/C. P. J./
Examiner, Art Unit 1797

/ROBERT J. HILL, JR/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797